



NEWS RELEASE

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APG to destroy chemical cylinders

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. – Army experts here are planning to destroy seven cylinders of hydrogen cyanide, a volatile, hazardous industrial chemical, after a similar cylinder was discovered April 16 to have burst in a chemical laboratory flammable materials storage cabinet.

In response to the event, emergency plans were implemented and appropriate Federal, State and local agencies were notified. No personnel were in the building at the time and no hazardous material was detected inside or outside the facility following the event.

Although the event is still under investigation, preliminary evidence suggests that a chemical reaction occurred in the cylinder causing the pressurized container to burst. Equipment in the room was damaged, as was a wall in the facility.

Further investigation of the laboratory and other locations at the proving ground discovered another seven hydrogen cyanide cylinders which have been deemed unsafe for further storage or transportation elsewhere.

To render the cylinders and their contents safe the Army is planning to use its transportable Explosive Destruction System (EDS). The EDS was developed by the Army's Project Manager for Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel to give the Army a transportable system able to safely neutralize recovered chemical munitions, including those containing hydrogen cyanide. Since 1999, the EDS has been used to safely destroy items at Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Colo., Spring Valley in Washington, D.C., and recently at Dover Air Force Base, to destroy an old chemical munition found in southern Delaware.